
THE
Excellency of Unity :

A
SERMON

Preached by the Appointment of the
Ministers of the Congregational and Presbyte-
rian Perswasion at their Happy Union :

On the Sixth Day of *April*, 1691.

by *MATTHEW MEAD*,
Pastor of a Church of Christ at *Stepney*.

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: Excellence of Quality :

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Created by the appointment of the
President of the Continental Congress

BY MARY P. W. M. B. D.

Two Sticks made One:

OR, THE
EXCELLENCY
OF

UNITY.

BEING A
SERMON

Preached by the Appointment of
the Ministers of the Congregational and Presby-
terian Perswasion, at their Happy UNION.

On the Sixth Day of *April*, 1691. Which was a Day
set apart by them, partly to bewail former Divisions, and
partly as a Thanksgiving to God for their present Agreement.

And now at their Unanimous Request made Publick.

By *MATTHEW MEAD*,
Pastor of a Church of Christ at Stepney.

*Psal. 133. 1. Behold how good, and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell
together in Unity.*

*Si virtutum finis ille sit maximus qui plurimorum spectat profectum, modi-
ratio omnium pulcherrima est. Ambr.*

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Two Books made One

EXCISE

Y.

BOOK

OF THE
REVENUE
AND
CUSTOMS
OF THE
REIGN OF
GEORGE THE FIRST

BY
JAMES OBERLIN

LONDON
Printed by J. B. Smith, in the Strand

1724

Price 1s. 6d.

To the Reverend
THE
Dissenting Ministers
OF
LONDON,
Formerly called
Congregational and Presbyterian,
But now known by the Name of
United Brethren

Reverend, and much honoured in the Lord,

A *S* this Sermon had not been Preached, so
nor had it been made publick, but in obe-
dience to your Call ; which I the more wil-
lingly complied with, that I might thereby
give Testimony to my readiness of promo-
ting that good Design abroad, which you have made so
happy a progress in at home.

Yours

The Epistle Dedicatory.

You no sooner had appointed me to this Work, but God pointed me to the Text; which I found so suitable to the Occasion, that I resolved to do the utmost my short Arm could reach to, in improving it to the blessed ends of Love and Union, that I might thereby shew my self to be not only εἰρηνικόν, but εἰσπνοτικόν; and endeavour with all my might that the Heaven below might be made like the Heaven above, a quiet and peaceable Habitation.

To intermeddle in Matters of Strife is in common Cases deemed a thankless Office, and he oft times feels most Fists who steps in to part the Fray. Μίγες ἀπ' ἀμπορέων κρητὸν πᾶσι. But the Goodness of this Undertaking is such, as will richly Recompense for the greatest Inconvenience that can attend the Attempt; and if it should not find Success among Men, I am satisfied that it will not want a Blessing from God.

Naz. Ora. de Pace.

None can, with any colour of Reason, be prejudiced at this happy Undertaking of yours, which is not in the least intended to countenance any Carnal or Worldly Design, but to serve the great Interests of our Lord Jesus, and promote that Kingdom of his which is not of this World.

Many there are who call every kind of Compliance baseness, and a betraying of Principles; but so long as our Consciences tell us, that what we do is in Obedience to the Command of Christ, the peace we shall find within will more than pay the Charge of all unjust Censures from without. Men of such rough and sour Spirits are ready to think God to be such a one as themselves; As the Lacedæmonians, being a Warlike People,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

He, represented their Gods all in Armour. But God is love, and he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him.

Who doth not desire to see the Church of Christ in a flourishing state? It was one of Austin's wishes, to see Romam in flore. And should it not be every good Man's wish, to see Ecclesiam in flore? When the Temple is purged, and a Separation made between the Sanctuary and the profane Place, (Ezek. 41. 20.) then the Glory of the Lord will fill the House, Ezek. 43. 5.

God hath eminently appeared among you hitherto in carrying on this blessed Work, therefore it greatly concerns us to hold him fast by Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, lest this Silence in Heaven should be but for the space of half an hour.

How should the consideration of the Coming of the Lord, which now draws very nigh, put us all upon promoting this Work. Will it not be a very uncomfortable thing to be found in our Divisions in that day? Therefore we ought not to stand at a distance, but upon such Reasons as will justify our dissent, and be approved of by the impartial Judge.

The Lord pour out a richer measure of the Spirit of Love upon all that fear his Name, and shew to them that $\chi\alpha\theta' \ \ \epsilon\pi\epsilon\sigma\omicron\lambda\eta\nu \ \ \epsilon\delta\delta\omicron\nu$ which none can find, but they who are taught of God. The Inquiry after which, in order to walking therein, was the chief Design of this Discourse. Such as it is it is now yours, not only by my Act in the Dedication, but by your own in the Publication. And there-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

therefore as it humbly begs your Patronage because it needs it, so it earnestly calls for your Observance because of the importance of the Design of it, which is to strengthen the Staff of Bands now put into your hands by God; and this nothing can do but a constant and conscientious practice of those Principles upon which your Union stands.

And now Brethren, as that Rod out of the Stem of Jesse (upon whom the Spirit of the Lord rests, the Girdle of whose Reins is Faithfulness) hath so far fulfilled that comfortable Promise, as to cause the Wolf to dwell with the Lamb; let it also appear that he hath bowed your Spirits to such an intire Resignation to Truth, as that a Child may lead you. And then the Counsels here given will be as readily imbraced, and as carefully practised, as they were faithfully tendered by him who greatly rejoyceth to be known by the pleasing Title of one (tho the meanest) of the united Brethren, and

Your most faithful Servant,

Matth Mead.

Two Sticks made One.

EZEK. XXXVII. 19.

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the Tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

WHat our Lord Christ said in *Luk. 4. 21.* upon his reading that of the Prophet *Isaiab*, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tydings to the meek,* &c. This day, says he, this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears. The same I may say of this Scripture now read to you, God hath in a great measure this day fulfilled it among you.

A Scripture which seems exactly fitted to this Days Design, which is partly for humbling in regard of former Divisions; and partly for rejoycing with respect to the present Union.

Accordingly you have in the Text two Sticks, *The stick in the hand of Ephraim*, and the stick of *Judah*: that is, *Ephraim* against *Judah*, and *Judah* against *Ephraim*. This is matter of mourning. But then you have these two sticks *made one in the hand of the Lord*, and that is cause of rejoycing. *Isa. 9. 21.*

As in the Body Natural, Health is the Salt of all Mercies, so in Bodies Politick, and Ecclesiastical, the Salt of all Mercies is Peace and Union, without which no good can be

B

long

Two Sticks made One.

long preserved, or comfortably enjoyed. And therefore our Lord hath put them together, *Mark 9. ult. Have salt in your selves, and have peace one with another.*

The desirableness of Peace and Union cannot be better set out, then by reflecting upon the direful Mischiefs of Discord and Division. One says, *Numerus binarius est infamis, quia primo ausus est ab unitate discedere.*

Eph. 4. 3.

It is an accursed number, as first departing from Unity. I am sure the departing from that Unity which we are called of God to keep, *viz. The unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace*, is a very cursed thing.

Jerom calls Divisions, *Amicorum dispendia, inimicorum compendia, divina ire incendia*. So that we may say of them, what *Austin* says of Original Sin, *Peccatum, causa peccati, pena peccati*. They are not only sin, and the cause of sin, but the punishment of sin too, so that they are nothing but a heap of sin.

Divisions in a Kingdom, in a City, in a Family are very sad, and have sad effects; *Christ* says, they can't stand where these are, (*Mat. 12. 25.*) but no Divisions so sad as they that happen among the People of God. *For the divisions of Reuben there were sad thoughts of heart, Judg. 5. 15.*

When Brethren are divided, and the Fire is kindled in our own Bowels, rising from our selves, this is sad indeed. As the Prophet says, *Ezek. 19. 14. Fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a scepter to rule, this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.*

And this was the very case of the People in the Text, a long and sad division had been among them from the time of *Feroboam*, not only as they were a State, but as they were a Church too; Civil division brought in Ecclesiastical; they could not agree in one Government, nor in one way of Worship. Two Tribes cleave to the Worship of the Temple, but the rest of them must have their Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*. So that they were not only divided as a State; but which is more sad, they were divided as a Church of God.

Now

Two Sticks made One.

3

Now hear God promises to heal their Divisions, and to make them one; *they shall be one in my hand.* In the whole Chapter you have two Prophecies, in which are contained two great Promises, excellently suited to two great Evils this People were now under, *viz.* Division, and Desolation.

Their Desolation is set out in the former part of the Chapter, under the Type of a Valley of dry Bones, *vers. 1, 2.*

The Thing God promises is Redemption, under the Type of making *dry Bones live.* This you have from the third verse to the fourteenth.

Their Division is set out by the Type of two Sticks, the Promise God makes is to cure their Divisions, and unite them again, and this under the Type of making two Sticks one, and not only so, but to bring them into a firmer Union than ever.

They shall be united to be one People, *vers. 22.* *They shall be no more two Nations, I will make them one upon the Mountains of Israel.*

They shall be united in one God, *vers. 23.* *They shall be my People, and I will be their God.*

They shall be united under one King, *vers. 24.* *David my servant shall be King over them, and they shall have one Shepherd.*

They shall be united in one way of Repentance, *vers. 23.* *They shall not defile themselves any more with their Idols, nor with their detestable Things, nor with any of their Transgressions.*

They shall be united in one way of Reformation, *vers. 24.* *They shall walk in my Judgments, and observe my Statutes, and do them.*

They shall be united in one Covenant, *vers. 26.* *I will make a Covenant of Peace with them, it shall be an everlasting Covenant.*

They shall be united in one way of Worship, *vers. 26, 27.* *I will set my Sanctuary in the midst of them for ever, my Tabernacle also shall be with them.*

Now such a Union as this, for a People to be made one in one God, under one King, in one way of Repentance and Reformation, in one Covenant, and in one way of Wor-

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ship; what a firm, what a spiritual, what a compleat, and consequently what a blessed Union must this be.

Concerning which, in the whole of this Prophecy, wherein it is contained, you may observe four things.

1. Here is the Subject Matter of this Union described, and that both in the Type (as I may call it) and in the Antitype. In the Type it is two Sticks. In the Antitype it is the Church of God in two parts. This is in the sixteenth verse.

2. Here is a Writing to be inscribed; which is not only commanded, but the words of the Writing dictated. *Write upon one Stick, for Judah, and for the House of Israel his Companions: i. e. the Tribe of Benjamin, and all the rest that joynd with them in their way of worship.*

And write upon the other Stick, for Joseph, the Stick of Ephraim, and all the House of Israel, his Companions. That is, the the other Ten Tribes, who were joynd under Jeroboam in his way of Worship.

3. Here is the Way and Manner of this Union directed. *Joyn them one to another into one Stick, vers. 17.*

4. Here is the meaning of all unriddled and explained, in the words of the Text, *Behold, I will take the Stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the Tribes of Israel his Fellows, and will put them with him, even with the Stick of Judah, and make them one Stick, and they shall be one in my hand.*

To attempt the explaining the Nature, or Kind, or Meaning of these Sticks, when the thing intended by them is so fully expressed, would be but trifling with the Text, which I shall endeavour to improve to more useful purposes.

There is only one thing that I shall remark upon in the words, before I come to what I intend. And that is, the Form of the Promise in which this Union is wrapped up.

I will make them one Stick, and they shall be one in my hand.

1. What Oneness is this that is here promised?
2. What is intended by this doubling the Promise?
3. What is implied by being one in God's hand?

I. What

Two Sticks made One.

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1. What *Oneness* is this that is here promised and pointed at? Wherain doth it especially consist?

There are several sorts of *Oneness* in Scripture.

There is an *Oneness* of divers Persons in one Nature.

There is an *Oneness* of differing Natures in One Person.

And there is an *Oneness* of sundry Natures and Persons in one Quality.

In the first is One God; *Deut. 6. 4.*

In the second is One Christ; *1 Cor. 8. 6.*

In the third is one Church. *Cant. 6. 9. My Undeiled is but One.* *Acts 4. 32. The multitude of them that believed were of One heart, and of One soul.*

This is an Ecclesiastical *Oneness*, and it is that which the Text chiefly points at.

Bellarmino speaks of a sixfold *Oneness* in the Church.

1. In respect of God who calleth, but this makes the Church not so much *una*, as *sub uno*, one, as under one.

2. In respect of the end, the Salvation to which it is called, but this makes the Church not so much one, as *ad unum*.

3. In respect of the means, as Word, Faith, and Sacraments. But thus the Church is rather *by one*, than one.

4. In respect of the Spirit as a separated Governour.

5. In respect of Christ as a conjoynd Head.

6. In respect of the connexion of the members among themselves; and in these two last respects (says he) it is most properly *one*.

So that this *Oneness* is such in the inward principles; and outward practice of Religion; as concerns the people of God joyntly and reciprocally in their Church State, as joynt Members of Christ, and one of another.

And this is the *Oneness* here promised, *I will make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand.*

But 2. what is intended in the doubling this promise? *I will make them one, and they shall be one.*

1. It may point at a twofold Union, Passive, and Active. *He makes them one*; that's a passive union, God is alone in it. *They shall be one*, that is more active, there is the operation of Man in it.

As

Two Sticks made One.

As it is in the union betwixt Christ and the Christian ; it is first passive, and then active. There is the operation of the spirit uniting, and then the act of Faith in closing ; we are apprehended of Christ, before we can apprehend Christ. *Plat.* 3. 12.

Union, as some calls it, is in order of nature before union, and so it is in this union in the Text, between Christian and Christian, Believer and Believer, Church and Church. God is first in it. Uniting Graces must precede uniting acts, and if God thus make us one, then we shall be one. For,

2. The doubling the promise, imports the certainty of the accomplishment. As *Pharaoh's* dreams were doubled, so the promise is here repeated, *because the thing is established by God, and he will surely bring it to pass. I will make them one, and they shall be one.* Q. d. None shall be able to hinder it. *I work, and who shall let it?* Sometimes God divides a people, and then none can unite them ; *God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech, and the men of Shechem.*

So when God unites, none can divide ; if he makes the two sticks one, they shall be one. *When he gives peace, who then can make trouble?*

3. It implis such a union, as shall be both inward and outward, in principle and practice, in affection and action. *I will make them one ; that is, in Judgment and Principle. And they shall be one ; i. e. in Worship and Practice.* For it is explained by that in *Jer. 32. 39. I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever. One heart without one way is unfruitful. And one way without one heart is hypocritical ; but one heart, and one way is no less then Angelical, for thereby his will is done on earth as it is in Heaven.*

So that a full and compleat Union between his People is here pointed at. *I will make them one ; that is, I will give them one heart. And they shall be one ; that is, they shall walk in one way. And so with one mind, and one mouth they shall glorify God.*

But thirdly, What is intended by being one in his hand ? *I will make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand.*

1. It points to the influencing power of God in bringing this oneness about. The Hand in Scripture is frequently put for

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for Power. So *Deut. 32. 36.* The Lord shall repent himself for his servants, when he sees that their powers are gone (*כִּי אָזַח ד*) that their hand is gone, *Dan. 6. 27.* He hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions, (*סִיר אֲרִיֹתָהּ*) so the Chaldee, from the hand of the lions. So here the hand of God implies *Isa. 11. 11.* his power; and indeed the curing the divisions of his people, is a work that calls for a mighty power. *Odia religionum acerbissima.* Solomon says, *The contentions of brethren are like the bars of a castle, Prov. 18. 19.* It is so of such as are brethren by place or race, and it is so much more (the more is the pity) among such as are brethren by grace; *corruptio optimi pessima.* It made *Strigelius* weary of living, and wish to depart out of the world, that he might be freed *ab immanibus & implacabilibus oditi Theologorum.* Therefore Solomon compares them to the bars of a castle, very strong and hardly bowed or broken. None can do it but God; and when he by the power of the spirit of love and union breaks these bars in sunder, then they become one in the hand of the Lord. *Melch. Adam. in vita.*

2. It implies a union in the Truth; every union is not a being one in Gods hand. There may be union in sin, a union in error. *All the world wondered after the beast;* a union to support the Antichristian Interest. *Rev. 13. 8.* It is said of the ten horns, *these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast, Revel. 13. 12, 13.* Now this is so far from being a union in the hand of God, that it is the quite contrary, it is union in the hand of Satan. If we are not united in the truth, whatever our union may be, yet we cannot be said to be one in the hand of the Lord.

3. It implies the reality and cordialness of this union, a love without dissimulation; you read of an *144000 which stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, Revel. 14. 1.* And here are two things mentioned concerning them to our purpose; their unity, and their sincerity: oneness and uprightness.

Here is their unity in Doctrine pointed at in their number, *144000*, which is a number rooted in twelve, to shew that they were all built upon that one foundation of the twelve Apostles, of which Christ was the corner stone, and that their Doctrine and worship is pure and Apostolical.

Then

Two Sticks made One.

Then here is their unity in Profession; they have all one
Ver. 1. name, written in one place, *they have his father's name written in their foreheads*; that is, they make the same open and visible profession of their subjection and obedience to the same authority, Government, Laws, and Ordinances of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then here is their unitedness in blessing and praising God. This is intimated by their having the same Instruments,
Ver. 2. and the sameness of their Song. They all *harp upon their harps, and they all sung as it were a new Song before the Throne.*

Then here is mention of their Oneness in keeping their Consciences pure from all Idolatrous Worship, and Antichristian pollutions. *These are they which are not defiled with women, for they are Virgins.*
Ver. 4.

To name no more, here is their Unity in true Worship.
Ver. 4. *These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes.*

And that which crowns all, and puts a Glory upon this blessed Union is, that it is done in simplicity and godly sincerity, without any antichristian equivocations, or mental reservations. Therefore it is said, *ver. 5. In their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the Throne of God.*
2 Cor. 1. 12.

My Brethren, if our Union be of this kind, without guile if it be founded in sincerity, and uprightness of heart to God, then are we without fault before the Throne, *and one in the band of God.*

4. Such a Union will be an abiding, induring Union. And so much is implied in the words, wherein there seems to be a double promise of it intimated. God doth not only say, *I will make them one*, which imports a Union for the present; but *they shall be one*; which secures this Union for the future, it shall abide when once effected; for therefore he adds, *They shall be one in my hand*, *q. d.* The same power that hath accomplished, and brought it to pass, shall also preserve and maintain it.

That which is made one in the hand of the Lord shall be always one; *None shall pluck them out of my hand.* And *ver. 23. They shall no more defile themselves with any of their transgressions, of which their discords and divisions were none of the least; and therefore he adds in the same verse, So shall they be my people, and I will be their God.*

They

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They were his People, and he was their God before: but here he renews his Covenant with them, as brought into a state of union. This is implied in this (So), *So shall they be my people, and I will be their God.* His Covenant is renewed with them, not only as glorying in their union, for now he is not ashamed to be called their God; but also as confirming of it.

4. Here is also implied the extensiveness of this Union. *They shall be one in my hand.* Who are intended by this *They*? reaches to all, at home and abroad, in City and Country. One stick is to be written upon, not only for Judah, but for all his Companions. And the other stick not only for Ephraim, but for all the House of Israel his Companions. These are *They* of whom God says, *I will make them one, and they shall be one in my hand.* It shall be an extensive Union. So it is explained, v. 21. *I will gather them on every side.* And v. 22. *One King shall be King to them all.* And v. 24. *They all shall have one Shepherd.*

Ver. 16.

When God undertakes to unite his People, he will make it a compleat Work.

It shall be a Union in the Truth.

It shall be a Union in Principle and Practice.

It shall be a cordial and sincere Union.

It shall be an extensive Union.

And it shall be an abiding Union.

And this may suffice for the opening the Terms. Many useful Truths might be deduced from the words; but the only thing I shall pitch upon, and speak briefly to, shall be this.

That it is God alone who can heal the Divisions, and unite the hearts of his People, and whenever he doth do it, it is a great mercy.

Doct.

I shall speak to the Point under two Heads.

I. It is God alone who can heal the Divisions which are among his People, and make them one.

II. When God is pleased to heal the Divisions of his People, and make the *two sticks one*, it is a great mercy.

C

I. R

Two Sticks made One

1. It is God alone that can heal the Divisions that are among his People, and make them One. And this will be evident, if

1. We do but consider the Source of their Divisions, from whence they spring. The Roots which produce and nourish them,

(1.) One is from the Malice of Satan. He is the envious One that sows these Tares. He is the great Incendiary, that uses all Arts to divide and separate the People of God. He loves to set his *clowen foot* in the place of God's feet. So the Church is call'd, *Isa. 60. 15.*

Now no Power but that of God can bind him and cast him out, *Rev. 20. 2.*

(2.) From difference of Apprehension. Good men may agree in *one Aim*, and yet not in *one way*; the End may be the same, tho the Means vary. It is difference of Light that causes difference of Judgment; and that works to divide the Affections, and then all is on a flame. Ye read *Revel. 15. 2.* of them that had gotten the Victory over the Beast, and over his Image, and mark, and number of his Name, and yet they stand upon a Sea of Glass mingled with Fire.

And this is such a Fire as none but God can quench.

(3.) They spring from corrupt Principles and Lusts within. What the Apostle says of worldly Contentions, we may say of Spiritual. *Whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your Lusts that war in your Members?* James 4. 1. There are some Lusts especially that make good men a burden to each other. Such as Pride, and Vain-glory, Love of the World, Ambition, and desire of Precedency, envy at anothers Repute, irregular Zeal, and such like; these make us very touchy, and to become *Pricking briers*, and *grieving Thorns* among our selves. There hath been too much experience of this in these *Dog-days* of the Church, wherein so many have been barking and biting at one another.

Man's Nature is so prone to Discords through the influence of these remaining Lusts, that they would no more unite then crumbs of Sand, did not God bring it about, and make them One in his hand. Therefore it is said, *I will make them One, and they shall be One in my hand.*

Two Sticks made One.

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2. It is a Prerogative peculiar to God. The Text intimates so much, *they shall be one in my hand.* No Oneness if God hath not a hand in it. Men may use means and contrive methods for Union, but it is not the policy or skill of all the Reconcilers in the World can bring it about, without God.

How many have brought their Buckets to quench the Churches Flames. Many Antidotes have been prescribed, many Rules and pacific Means have been commended by wise and good men for the Cure of our Divisions. But still there wants a Divine Power within.

Men may take *two Sticks* and tie them together, or glue them to each other. But nothing will make them *one Stick*, but the hand of God. Hence he is called *the God of Peace*, *Hebr. 13. 20.* and he is said to *create Peace*, *Isa. 45. 7.* Now you know Creation is making something out of nothing. And indeed so is this. Look throughout this whole transaction, from first to last, and you can't find any thing out of which this Union should be formed. Either Wisdom, or Power, or Strength, or Policy, or any thing else. It is a pure Creation, for it is out of nothing. And this you have in your Preface expressed a due sense of, in giving to him the glory of his Power, by ascribing the Success of these Attempts to the *signal Presence of God*.

3. If the Breaches and Divisions that at any time fall out among the Lord's People be a Judgment from the Lord, then he alone can make them *One*. For who can remove a Judgment that comes from God, but God himself? the same hand that wounds, must heal. *He hath smitten, and he will bind us up.* *Hos. 6. 1.*

Now the Divisions that are among Gods People, tho they proceed from sin originally, yet there is a Judicial Dispensation in them. *Hear, O ye Mountains, the Lord's Controversie*, *Mich. 6. 2.* All their intestine Divisions are the Lords Controversie. This is one way by which God awenges the quarrel of his Covenant, *Lev. 26. 25.* When his People break with him, then he breaks them one against another. *Jer. 13. 13, 14.* *I will fill all the Inhabitants of the Land, the Kings, the Priests, and the*

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Prophets, and all the Inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness, and I will dash them one against another. So Zech. 11, 14. I will asunder my Staff of Bands, that I might break the Brotherhood between Judah and Israel. Ye read in Isa. 59. 21. of Manasse against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasse, and they together against Judah. And this is said to be from the Wrath of the Lord of Hosts, vers. 19. And what Wisdom or Skill of Men can quench this Wrath of God? it must be God himself. As fire is said to fetch out fire, so nothing can extinguish this fire of God's Anger, but the kindling of his own Repentings. How shall I give thee up Ephraim? my breath is turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together. And he is said to repent himself for his servants when he sees their punishment gone, Deut. 32. 36. When their Wound is incurable for want of healing Medicines, then God will plead their Cause, and the Wound shall be bound up. For he glorieth in this Title, I am the Lord that healeth thee, Exod. 15. 26. I point O word not yet

Hos. 11. 8.

Jer. 30. 13.

4. This will further appear, if you consider the Season of this blessed Cure. Usually it is when his People are brought very low. The virtue of his Medicines is best known when the Wound is desperate, and to the eye of Sense, past healing.

Hos. 2. 14.

Ezek. 37. 2.

Ver. 11.

Ver. 7.

Dan. 5. 25.

God reserves the speaking of this Comfort till the Church is brought into a Wilderness. How is it that the Bones are brought together, bone to his bone, but by the Breath of the Lord? and when did this breath enter into them, but when they were scattered in the open Valley, and Lo they were very dry? No Life, no expectation, no hope of Union; Behold, they say our Bones are dried, our hope is lost. Then behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when doth God command the Prophet to write upon Judah and Ephraim, but when they were in a very low, and hopeless Condition? and therefore he must write upon two Sticks. A Stick is a dead thing, a dry thing, a withered thing; a fit Emblem of the low Condition they were in. And what is the writing upon your Sticks at this time? Not a *Idene rebel upstart*. No, blessed be God, but the quite contrary: *Heads of Agreement, united Brethren*. A blessed Hand-writing; and if it be not written

ren upon dry Sticks judge you. So that none could have caused this to be written, if God had not said to us, as he did to the Prophet, *Son of Man, write upon them.* And therefore what the Apostle says in another case, I may say in this, *Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God.* 2 Cor. 3. 3.

2. When God is pleased thus to heal the divisions of his people, and make the *two sticks one* in his hand, it is a great mercy. For

1. When God doth this, it is to accomplish the promise, and every promise travels with mercy; there can be nothing but mercy in the promise; therefore when ever it brings forth, the birth must be mercy.

Now God hath made great promises concerning the peace and oneness of his people. *The envy of Ephraim shall depart, he shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim, Isa. II. 13. v. 6. The wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid. The Cow and the Bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together.* The meaning is, that all sourness, and fierceness, and bitterness of spirit shall cease among the subjects of Christ, and a spirit of love and sweetness shall take place, and heal all.

Ye have many promises of this kind, and some that have a more direct aspect to the last times, and therefore look wishly upon us. Such is that in, *Zeph. 3. 9. Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the Name of the Lord, and serve him with one consent.* So *Zech. 13. 19. In that day the Lord shall be one, and his Name one.* But is not his Name one now? yea, in itself it is. *He is the God of truth*, that is his Name. But while there are different ways of profession, and each party intitles God to his particular way, this gives him many Names; the differing claims that divided interests make to God, give him many Names. But in that day his Name shall be one; differing ways and modes of Worship shall cease, all his people shall be united in the same mind and judgement, and shall own God in the same truth, and the same way of worship, and so his Name shall be one.

But this day is said to be when Christ shall be King over all.

Two Sticks made One.

the earth, *Christ shall be King over all the earth, and in that day the Lord shall be one, and his Name one.*

This is that Christ promises in the New Testament, *John 10. 16. There shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

2. It is a great mercy in that the ruine of their enemies follows upon it. You seldom read of any great healing among the Churches and people of God, but their enemies have soon felt the effects of it. It is no sooner said in *Isa. 11. 13. The envy of Ephraim shall depart*, but the next words are, *The adversaries of Judah shall be cut off.* His work is no sooner performed upon *Mount Zion*, but the next work is the pulling down the *Assyrian*, *Isa. 10. 12.* and in *Is. 15. 10.* No sooner are Gods people one in his hand, but his enemies are trod under his feet, *as straw is trodden down for the dunghil.* And *1 Revel. 19. 14.* the Saints are said to follow Christ *cloathed in fine linnen, clean and white*; their cloathing shows their holiness, and their following him, shews their oneness; and when they follow him thus cloathed, then you read of his *sharp sword*, and his *iron rod*, and his *treading the wine press of the wrath of God* upon his enemies, *v. 15.* all which is explained in the following words, to the end of the Chapter, where you have the *Battle of Armageddon* fought, and the *Beast* and *false Prophet*, and all the rest of the Churches Enemies destroyed. And if the destruction of the Churches Enemies be a consequent of their Union, then when God makes the *two sticks one*, it is a great Mercy.

I might add,

3. The notice that God would have to be taken of it, speaks out the greatness of the mercy. *That they may know from the rising of the Sun to the West, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is none else; I make peace, and create evil,* *Isa. 45. 6.*

4. The blessings and prosperity that flow from this Union speak the greatness of the mercy. When *peace is within Jerusalem's walls*, there will be *prosperity within her Palaces.*

Psal. 122. 7.

But I pass these, and shall insist only on this one thing, which will sufficiently set forth the greatness of this Mercy and Union, and that is,

5. The

5. The Evils and Divisions among God's People. Their Name is *Legion*, they are so many. Nothing thrives where this Wolf sets his foot. *Where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work*, James 3. 16. It is the root of many bitter fruits. We read Gen. 38. that Pharez was the Son of Tamar. Pharez signifies Fraction and Division, Tamar signifies a Palm-Tree. *Ab amaritudine*, say some, from bitterness. *Pagnini*. Division comes from bitterness, and brings forth bitter fruits. *The grapes of it are grapes of gall, the clusters are bitter.* Deut. 32. 31.

For instance: Your Divisions are very dishonourable to Jesus Christ, they cause his Name to be blasphemed in the World, Rom. 2. 24. Nay, it is an implicate denying him to be come in the flesh. For when he comes, this is to be one effect of it, *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, &c.*

It is one Argument the Jews have against Christ's being come, because this Prophecy is not fulfilled.

My Brethren, Is the Lord Christ come into the World, or is he not? If not, why do ye own it? If he is, why don't ye manifest it? It is your Union that must prove Christ's Mission.

Christ prays for the Oneness of his Disciples for this very end, John 17. 21. *That they all may be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* And again, v. 23. *Let them be perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me:* As if Christ should say, the World will never believe, that thou hast sent me, that my Doctrine is true, if they that profess it live not in the power of it, and are not made one by it. Thou art Love, and what shall convince the World that I came out of the Bosome of the Father's love, when my Disciples hate one another? Oh how dishonourable to Christ must this be!

2. Divisions are a great grief to the Spirit of God, and we are commanded not to grieve him, Eph. 4. 30. *Grieve not the holy spirit of God.* Have ye not your light and life from the Spirit? Did not he convince, and convert, and draw you to Christ? Was it not he that lead you into the Secrets of God? that revealed the Mysteries of the Kingdom, the deep Things of God, and Eternal Life to you? Your Calling had never been effectual,

2 Cor. 12. 4. effectual, if the Spirit had not been in it, to make it so. Are not your Parts, and Gifts, and various Attainments, all from the Spirit? And is not every Grace, and every Degree of Grace in you, the Workmanship of the Spirit? And is it not the Spirit that quickens you in Duties, and maintains in you a frame of heart for communion with God? Who is it that comforts your Souls in troubles, and that teaches you to comfort others? that helps you against Corruptions within, and Temptations without? that conquers your Difficulties, and enables you to rejoyce in Tribulation? Is it not the Spirit? Is not he the earnest of your inheritance? Hath he not sealed you to the day of redemption? and will you grieve this Spirit? Oh what an evil is this!

3. There is nothing more contrary to Christianity; and yet we cover our Divisions under the cloak of Religion, the very Name whereof carries Union with it. *Religio à religando*: It is the Bond of God upon the Soul, that binds us all to himself, and one to another. As God is the God of Peace, Christ the Prince of Peace, the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Peace, his Children the Children of Peace; so the Gospel you profess, and preach, is the Gospel of Peace, full of Precepts of Peace; you are, if it be possible, and as much as in you lies, to live peaceably with all men, much more to have peace one with another; else you violate your Baptismal Covenant, For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free. And what an evil is this? It is Death to force a Virgin, what is it then to defile a pure and holy Religion?

Rom. 12. 18.
Mark 9. 50.

1 Cor. 12. 13.

4. Divisions are the causes of much sin. Shake a Glass of Water that hath dregs in the bottom, and the shaking stirs it, and spreads it all over. I have often thought of that Counsel of the Apostle, Eph. 4. 26. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath*. It must be speedily suppressed, for if we lie down in our heats, we shall be apt to burn all the Night. It was a Custom formerly in this Nation, that every Night at the 8th hour, a Bell was rung, and then every Family was obliged to put out their Fire; and this was called the Curfew Bell.

We have need of such a Monition every hour to cover the Fire of our Passions, lest they kindle, and burn up all. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles, Jam. 3. 5.

5. Divisions

Two Sticks made One.

17

Divisions are against Love, as Error is against Faith: It can undo the bond of Peace. *The great house is smitten with breaches, and the little house with clefts.* Not only Kingdoms, but Churches are destroyed when their Guides and Leaders are divided in opinion, and affection. One carps at anothers Gifts, derides anothers Ministry, stands in the way of anothers Honour; like men in a Boat, one jostles another, till among them they sink the Boat it self. O the evil of Divisions! It was not therefore without most cogent Reason that Christ prays for his own Apostles, (Joh. 17. 11.) *that they may be one.* Amos 6. 11.

Divisions are the fruits of the Flesh. The Apostle tells us *The fruits of the Spirit are love, peace, gentleness and meekness;* Gal. 5. 22. *but the fruits of the Flesh are hatred, variance, emulation, strife, and envyings;* ver. 20. So that a man can't evidence himself to be in the Flesh, and destitute of the Spirit of God in any thing more than by a contentious dividing Spirit. The Apostle says so, 1 Cor. 3. 3. *If their be envyings, and strifes, and divisions among you, are ye not carnal?* They are Salamanders that can live only in this Fire. And then I may ask, *who is their Father?* For the Wisdom that is from beneath is sensual, and devilish, the Mother of strife and division. But Jam. 3. 15.
the wisdom that is from above is pure, and peaceable. Ver. 17.
O how sad is it when the Flesh thus reigns in the Children of the Spirit!

7. Division naturally runs into Tumult and Confusion. It makes Zion to become a Babel. It so confounds the Language of Christians, that one can't understand another. As when a House is on Fire, some call for Water, some for Ladders, some for pulling down the House: Such is the confusion where this Fire breaks out in the House of God.

8. Nothing more obstructs the flourishing of Religion. And how sad is it, that the Interest and concerns of Christ should wither under our hands.

9. Nothing becomes a greater stumbling block to turn others out of the way of God. Division in the Church begets Atheism in the World. Men charge all the faults of Professors upon the Religion they profess, and thereby contract such prejudices against it as can never be rooted out. O what an evil is this!

10. Nothing becomes a greater Joy to our Adversaries, nor gives them a greater advantage to undermine and destroy us.

D

While

Hoc libanus
vult, &c.

While two Birds are pecking one another, the Kite comes and swoops away both. Our Contentions make us first a laughing-stock, then a prey to our Enemies; and therefore they are a sad forerunner of ruine. When *Isaiah* went to sacrifice his *Wife*, he found a *Ram* intangled in the Briars, which God had prepared for a Sacrifice; and if we are intangled in these Briars, we may justly fear we are prepared to be a Sacrifice.

These are some of the many Evils which might be reckoned up, that are in the divisions of Gods People, which may serve to set forth the blessing, and advantage of Union. And therefore when God binds up the breaches of his People, and makes the two sticks one, it is a great mercy.

Ma. 62. 1.

Shall I not make a little Application of this? I know to whom I speak, which makes it needful; but for *Sions sake* I will not hold my peace.

This Text affords two Uses that suit the end of this days appointment, which you have set apart, partly for Humbling, and partly for rejoycing.

Wol. 7. 4.

Ma. 19. 2.

Ma. 9. 21.

Here is matter of Humbling, that the people of God should be two sticks.

Here is matter of Reioycing that God hath made the two sticks one.

Let us Humble our selves before the Lord for our former Divisions. Is their not a Cause? when God calls to contend by Fire, it is a Token of his Anger. It is in favour to *Israel* when he sets the Egyptians against the Egyptians; but when *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* are divided, there is the Anger of God in it, and that should be matter of Mourning. And indeed the only way to a firm Union is to lay the foundation of it in shame and tears for past Divisions. Even in this sense God lays the beams of his chambers in the waters, and makes the clouds his chariot. There is no building without Mortar to hold the stones together, and there is no Mortar without Water. When *Israel* and *Judah* come out of *Babylon*, and inquire the way to *Sion*, and joy

Psal. 104. 3.

in a Covenant Union, it is all done in Tears, Jer. 30. 4, 5. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping, they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

They use in Faggotting either to twist the hands with some sapin them, or to lay them for a time in water, for when dry, they'll soap; but they'll bend and hold the twisting when well soaked. So the deeper your Humiliation is, the more durable will your Union be. Their is much cause of Humbling on this account.

For the Pride of our hearts, only by pride comes contention.

For the dishonour done to God by these differences.

For the reproach brought upon his ways.

For the offences and scandals given to many, whereby their Souls have been eternally hazarded: And should not the sense of this affect us? Some diseases are called *opprobria medicorum*, I am sure these are *opprobria Theologorum*. O let us joyn in this one thing, to mourn together, till we have dissolved our hearts into tears, and see if they'll run one into another, and let us resolve that nothing shall comfort them, but peace with God, and peace with one another.

Use. 2. When we have thus passed through the valley of Baca, Psal. 84. 6. and in this sense made it a well, we may then go on to Berachah, and sit down there, blessing and rejoycing in God, who hath made the two sticks one in his hand. If any thing should affect us, the great appearance of God should, wherein he hath put forth so much of his Power, Wisdom, Love, and Mercy.

Is it not a mercy you have long desired and prayed for? And God hath this day returned your prayers, like Noah's Dove, with an Olive Branch in the mouth. How long did our Fathers sow in Tears for this Harvest, and God hath reserved the reaping time for us their Children? And therefore let us joy before him according to the joy in Harvest. Isa. 9. 3.

This day hath the Lord rolled away our reproach, for what hath been the reproach we have been filled with? Is it not that

Two Setts made One.

we have been a divided people, crumbling into Factions and parties, fill'd with mutual animosities and jars, envying and hating one another? Now God hath brought us to *Gilgal*, for this day is the reproach roll'd away; and shall not God have the glory of this?

Ezek. 13. 9. You have this day made up one great Breach at which Judgment used to enter. Ye have gone up into the gaps, and made up the hedge for the house of Israel. You have this day recovered your strength. Division is a weakening thing. A Kingdom, a House, a Church divided cannot stand. Untwist a Cable and it is easily broken. Divide the Strongest Current into many streams, and it becomes shallow and weak.

You know the story of *Scilurus* who had Eighty Sons, on his Death-bed he caus'd a bundle of Arrows to be brought, and given to them, and bids them break it; when they had tried successively, they answered, that it was not to be done. He bids them take them one by one, and then the work was easie. Thereupon he tells his Sons, if ye agree together you will be strong, and invincible; but if you divide, you'll be weak, and easily overcome. God hath in this agreement bundled up his Arrows together; he hath made the *one stick*; and this is your strength in the hand of the Lord. Therefore he that glorifyeth his glory in the Lord, shall glorify in the Lord.

You have done that in this agreement that promises great advantage and comfort to our brethren abroad; it is like the beams of the Sun which diffuse light and heat to thousands at once. And what can please and rejoyce you, who are by calling, by Duty, by Affection, Men of publick Spirits and Aims, more than to be made such a blessing to the whole Interest of Christ through the Nation?

In this Union you have shewed a high Conformity to Christ, He is all for union. There is a union between him and the Father, a union between him and the Spirit, a union between him and the humane Nature, a union between him and all Believers. And it is such a union as admits of no disunion or dissolution. Nothing can untie it: not faults and failures, not blots or blemishes, no sins or swervings. Ah how many infirmities, neglects, omissions, how many weaknesses, wants, and wanderings doth Christ see in us, and yet the union remains. Now

when

when we are like minded one to another according to Christ Jesus. This highly glorifies God.

This union is an hopeful means to reconcile others to Religion, and bring them into the ways of Christ. It is said of the Primitive Christians, *They walked with one accord*; *quodvnamus*, and what fruit had it? *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.* Acts 2. 46, 47. How many have estranged themselves from Religion, and cast it off, because of the feuds, and heats of its Professors; afraid to touch it lest they burn their fingers in the fiery contentions that are kindled by reason of it. *Israel vedT*

Mr. Cotton, on the 2d. Cant. 7. *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes and by the Hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please*; senseth the words thus: By the Roes and Hinds are meant young beginners, persons under some preparatory work towards Conversion, who are as shy and fearful as Roes and Hinds, who are affrighted, and run at the barking of a Dog; so will these at any offences in the Churches of Christ. O how many have fallen and been turned out of the way, by the fatal stumbling blocks, which our divisions have laid in the way of their Conversion. Now God hath this day taken away the stumbling block, by making the two sticks one in his hand. And should we not bless God for this?

God hath intitled you by this agreement to the many and great blessings that are promised in this Chapter to this work. Do but see what promises God makes as a consequent of it.

1. It shall be an abiding union. When God unites his people, who or what can divide them? Unions made by the policy and arts of Men for carnal ends and interests, may be broken; but a union made by God and his Spirit shall not be broken. Therefore it is promised, ver. 22. *They shall be no more two Nations, neither shall they be divided any more at all.* That is one Mercy promised.

2. It shall be attended with a peculiar sanctifying work of the Spirit, ver. 23. *Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their*

Two Sticks made One.

their detestable things, for I will cleanse them. I know how these detestable things are interpreted. But may we not understand them of their divisions too, and the sins caused thereby? I am sure these are detestable things to God, and when his people are made one, they shall become so to them, working to shame and self-losing, and when they become so, they shall be no more defiling. For I will cleanse them, says God. This is another Mercy promised.

Ezek. 16. 61,
63.

3. It shall issue in a closer walking in all the ways and appointments of God. So ver. 24. *They shall walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.* They shall consult Divine Institutions, and frame their Worship and Ways according to them. And this is another Mercy promised.

4. It shall have its effect in a closer Covenant union to God. When his people are made one, he will renew his Covenant with them, make it more manifest that God and they are one. A thing is said to be then done in Scripture, when it is made more manifest. Therefore it is said ver. 23. *So shall they be my people, and I will be their God, q. d. I will make it appear to all the World that these are the people of God, and that I am the God of this people.* That is another Mercy promised.

5. It shall issue in a great advantage, and advance to the Kingdom of Christ. And hath not Christ gained a great point among you in this union? I know you can't but see it, and say it. Division shuts Christ out, union lets him in. This is a door opened in Heaven, for so the Church is called. *The everlasting doors are lifted up for the King of glory to come in.* You have prepared the way of the Lord to his Throne, and given him an abundance entrance into his Kingdom by this thing.

Rev. 4. 1.
Psal. 24. 7.

Then the Lord Christ Reigns indeed when his Church and People serve him *with one consent, in one way, and in one Spirit.* And therefore when the two sticks are made one, it is said, ver. 24. *David my servant shall be king over them, i. e. shall reign in the Church more visibly, more powerfully, more gloriously than ever.*

And therefore brethren, lift up your heads, and look for great things to result from this great work of making the two sticks one. I am well persuaded that God hath a great design in this thing, and that it will have a farther extent than you can fore-

foresee. How far it may reach to hasten the removal of all made things, all false Worship, all humane devisings, who can tell? This is plain in Scripture, that *Zions* building, and *Babylons* ruine; the *Lambs* *Marrying*, and the *Whores* *Burning*, do go together. The Church Militant and Malignant are like a pair of Ballances, or the Buckets of a Well, as one goes up, the other goes down. Heb. 12. 27. Rev. 19. 7, 20.

The Spirit of the Lord can't be quieted till the *white horses* have fetched his people out of *Babylon*, and the *black horses* have speeded her destruction. When the voice from Heaven once calls Gods people out of her, wrath from Heaven will quickly fall upon her. Zech. 6. 6, 8. Rev. 18. 4, 8.

But whatever the effect of this Dispensation of God be with-out, I am perswaded it will be great within. And therefore look for some glorious appearance of Christ both in your Churches, and Ministry, as the result and blessed fruit of it. For

6. It shall be attended with great Church Mercies. So it is said, ver. 26, 27. *I will set my Sanctuary in the midst of them, my Tabernacle also shall be with them. What is this Sanctuary?* the Septuagint render it *τὸ ἅγιον*, my holy things. It imports Purity of Gospel Worship. That in *Ezek. 43. 11* explains it. *Shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the going out, and the comings in thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the Laws thereof, and write it in their sight that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.* This is setting his Sanctuary and Tabernacle in the midst of us: And this receives farther light from that of *John*, Rev. 21. 2, 3. *When he saw new Jerusalem coming down from God, then he heard a voice out of heaven saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them. Are not these great Mercies?*

7. Nay it is such a Union as shall have its effect in a great increase. Division is a scattering judgment; *I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* But union and concord are blessed with increase. When were the Churches multiplied? but when they were at peace and walked together in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the holy Ghost; *Acts* 2. 31. Therefore God here doth not only promise to make them one, but so to make them one, that they shall thereby be many,

Gen. 49. 7.

ver.

Two Sticks made One.

ver. 26. *I will multiply them. And therefore sing O barren, thou that didst not bear, for thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left, and thy seed shall make the desolate Cities to be inhabited.* And this is another Mercy here promised.

Of the many Mercies that are the birth of this one Mercy ! And therefore if the *two sticks* are made *one*, give the glory to him who hath made them *one*, and hath said *they shall be one in his hand.* For it is the Lords doing, and should be marvellous in our eyes. And that the wonderful work of God may be to you matter of lasting joy, give me leave to direct about it a little.

1. Labour to manifest this union. If God hath made the *two Sticks one*, let it appear that they are one. Make it evident by seeking each others welfare, rejoyce in the gifts, and graces, and successes of others, as if they were our own; contributing your counsels, assistance, sympathy, and prayers for the common good. When we live and act as they that have but one Essence and Interest, this makes the union manifest, and shews that we are in a sense *one*, as God and Christ are *one*.

*Non minor est
virtus, &c.*

2. Use all means to preserve the union. God hath made the *two sticks one*, and he looks you should preserve the oneness. You come hardly by it, don't let it go; it hath cost many prayers to obtain it, and therefore we should spare no cost to preserve it. What is hardly got, should not be easily lost: It is as much a Duty to endeavour to keep it, as it was to seek it. *Indeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Eph. 4. 3.

Need I use any Motives to press this?

Motive

1. How many unities doth the Apostle urge as Arguments for the maintaining this Unity? All things in Religion are reduced to one, that the people of God may be one, and abide one. Eph. 4. 4. *There is one body, and one spirit, one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* How many *Ones* are here to move the People of God to be one.

[*There is one Body.*] As Christ had but one natural Body, so he hath but one Mystical. Christ hath many Members, but

he

the same but *one Body*, and all that believe in Christ are that *one Body*. Now how monstrous is it for the Members of the same Body to fight one against another, to rend and tare one another; for the Hand to pluck out the Eye, the Mouth to tear the Hand, &c.

What nearer then Members of the same Body? Brethren that have been *born*, out of the same Womb, have been divided in Interest and Affections, and have defaced all Feelings of Nature. You have instances of this in Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau. But it is not so with Members of the same Body. They care one for another, and perform their several Offices for the common good. Now ye are not only Friends and Brethren, but Members of *one Body*.

1 Cor. 12. 25.

2. *There is one Spirit.*] As all the natural Members of the same Body have but one and the same Soul, so all the Members of the Mystical Body of Christ, have one and the same Spirit. One Spirit to enlighten and teach, one Spirit to sanctify, and one Spirit to direct and lead. Why then should they not have *one heart*, and *one way*, when they are taught and led by one Spirit? Is he not the Spirit of Love and Meekness?

3. *There is one hope of our Calling;* i. e. One Heaven, our hoped for Glory, to which all are called. There is one Inheritance for all the Saints; and why should there not be *one Heart* in them that have *one Inheritance*?

4. *There's one Lord,*] and that is the Lord Christ, whom we all worship and serve. And shall fellow Servants differ that have the same Lord? *Is Christ divided?*

1 Cor. 1. 13.

5. *There is one Faith.*] One System of Christian Doctrine; and if their be but one Faith, why should we not be united therein in one judgment?

6. *There is one Baptism.*] This is that Sacrament whereby we are distinguished from the unbelieving World, and incorporated into the Body of Christ. *As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* And shall we by our disorders unbaptize our selves, by dividing from that Body into which we were baptized?

Two Sticks made One.

17. There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all] All these are to be restrained to the Church. *Father of all*, by Regeneration ; *above all*, by his Dominion ; *through all*, by his Presence and special Providence ; *in all*, by his Spirit and Grace.

And shall not we be one that have one God ? Shall he be over us, and through us, and in us, and should not this be an Argument to preserve Union among us ?

Motive 2. This is one great end of all Christs undertakings. It was one end of his coming into the World ; That in the fulness of time he might gather together in one, all things in Christ. Eph. 1. 10.

It was one end of his Ministry ; and therefore he doth so frequently inculcate it. *These things I command you, that ye love one another.* John 15. 17. and John 13. 34, 35.

It was much the matter of his Prayer for Believers, That they all may be one. He urges it again and again, no less than four times in three Verses. John 17. 21, 22, 23.

It was one end of his Death, to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad. John 11. 50. See Ephes. 2. 14, 15, 16.

It was one end of his ascension, and pouring out of his Spirit. It was not only to unite us to God, but to one another. He is the great uniting principle ; therefore the oneness of Believers is called *the unity of the Spirit*.

Eph. 4. 3.

You see how much the Heart of Christ was set upon this oneness among his People. Is this no motive ?

3. This is an evident badge, a manifest character of our Discipleship to Christ. John 13. 35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.* But if ye do not, whose Disciples will ye be known to be then ?

4. Let that of the Psalmist be a motive. *How good and pleasant it is for brethren to live together in unity.* Some things are good, but they are not pleasant ; as Afflictions. Some things are pleasant, but they are not good ; as Sins and Corruptions. Some things are neither good, nor pleasant ; as Envy and Malice : But Unity among Brethren is good and pleasant ;

Two Sticks made One.

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and so hath in it a double excellency, for which it should be sought and imbraced.

It is an evidence that God is accomplishing the latter day promises upon you. Zeph. 3. 9. *Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.* And Zech. 14. 9. *In that day shall the Lord be one, and his name one.* What day is that? When the Lord shall be King over all the Earth.

6. Nothing puts a greater beauty and glory upon you in the eyes of others, then this: Cant. 6. 9. *My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.* And what follows? *The daughters saw her, and blessed her, yea, the Queens, and Concubines, and they praised her. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.*

7. This is that which secures the presence of God with you. *Live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.* 2 Cor. 13. 11.

These are some of the many Motives I might urge for the preserving this Union, which is so great a Duty upon all the Churches; but more especially upon you, that are their guides and leaders; you are to go before them in it as the *goats of the Flock.*

Therefore you should be the great examples of it. The Faces of the *Cherubims* in the Temple looked one towards another: Which some think signified the agreement that should be among the Ministers of the Gospel. So the six branches of the golden Candlestick joyn'd all in one; which intimates that they who hold out the light of Truth to others should be one among themselves. Exod. 15. 31, 32.

Your Place, Calling, Office and Work, wherewith God hath entrusted you, do with a loud voice call you to this: More then the saving your own Souls lies upon your hands. The Glory of Christ, the promoting his Name and Interest, the building up his Church, the enlarging his Kingdom and Dominion, are the great part committed to you.

Are not your Names among the *Angels* who are to pour out

Two Gifts made One

How shall we pour out the Vials upon the Earth? For it is the vengeance of the Temple, and the Vials are in the hands of the Angels that come out of the Temple. Now I pray mark how they are clothed, in pure and white Linen, and their breasts girded with golden girdles. Rev. 15. 6. This denotes Purity, Peace and Unity. And how must these Vials be poured out? By Preaching the everlasting Gospel. And pray mind, the Preaching the everlasting Gospel is said to be the work but of one Angel, Rev. 14. 6. and yet the pouring out the Vials is the work of seven; to shew their unitedness in the Gospel, and cause of Christ against Antichrist.

Brethren, What design God may have to honour you in making use of your Gifts, and Learning, and Zeal for dethroning the Beast, and promoting the Kingdom of Christ, who can tell? But this I can tell, that it can never be done, but by a Spirit of Love and Union; and should we not labour to preserve it?

Quest. I but, how shall it be done.

Ans. 1. Labour to remove all the causes of division. Look back and see what root our discords sprang from? Come they not hence, even of our lusts? Whatever you find to have been the cause of them; whether Spiritual Pride, or a Contentious Disposition, or an affectation of Singularity, or error of Opinion, or admiration of Mens Persons, or a founnels of Spirit, or an ambition of drawing Disciples after us. Let the cause be what it will, it must be removed, if you would have the Union preserved.

2. Take heed of passing rigorous Censures on every light occasion, and making the worst of matters. In weighing the Actions of others, be sure alwayes to cast in the allowance of Humane Frailty, because it is that which you expect many grains of for your self, when another holds the scale. This absterity and founnels of Spirit, is usually attended with a double mischief; it hinders Union where it is indeavoured, and it often breaks it where it is attained. Those *anewbadi* that examine all things by the rigid rule of extream right, are neither

mer just not wise. They are not just to the Rule, which requires Moderation, and bearing and forbearing, where the case needs it. Nor are they wise for themselves: For such, Solomon says, trouble their own flesh.

Prov. 11. 17

3. Take heed of appropriating Christ to a party. A common evil; but a great one. It was the sin of the Church of Corinth; Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollo, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Now the Apostle reproves them all, as well them that said I am of Christ, as any of the rest.

1 Cor. 1. 12

But why did he reprove them? Is it not a Duty to be of Christ, and to own him above all? Yes, in a way of Union and Communion, but not in a way of Faction and Division. We are to own Christ in a way of preference above all, but not in opposition to any. We are to exalt him as the Author of our Faith, but not so as to slight the instruments of our Faith, which is the sin the Apostle here reproves. They were for preferring one Minister to the contempt of another. One was for Paul against Apollo, another for Apollo against Paul, a third for Peter against them both; a fourth was neither for one nor the other, but for Christ against them all; i. e. they cryed down all Humane Ministry, and were for the immediate teachings of Christ without any means or instruments. Now thus to say, I am of Christ, is a sin.

For as we must not make a Christ of Means, by resting upon them, so nor may we lay aside Means, expecting Christ should do all without them.

Be so for Christ as not to despise Ministry. Be so for the Ministry of one, as not to despise another. Do not appropriate Christ to any party. It is a dividing Spirit to say, Lo here is Christ, or lo there is Christ. It is to unfaint the whole World to Consecrate our own way. And this is a provoking thing, and must needs stir up strife and envy; for every man is concerned when his right and title is called in question.

Math. 24. 23

The Apostle discovers another Spirit, and more truly Catholic, when he writes to this Church, 1 Cor. 1. 2. To the saints at Corinth, and to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both yours and ours. He seems to

check

Two Parties made One,

check that proud and envious humour which would so inclose Christ to a party, as to deny and defeat all other claims. *Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours. Like that of Christ, My father and your father, my God and your God. John 20. 17.*

4. See that your Union be laid in Truth and Holiness.

Zech. 3. 19.

Isa. 8. 12.

(1.) In Truth : That must have the first place, *love the truth and peace.* Union in Errours, in false Principles, is no better than a confederacy against Christ. *And say not a confederacy.* That is a cursed accommodation that is made to the disservice of Religion ; because while we thus make peace with Men, we make a breach with God.

Heb. 12. 14.

(2.) Let your Union be founded in Holiness. It will not stand if it be not upon this bottom. Loose Zeal is not unity, but compliance. *Follow peace with all men; and holiness; without which no man shall see the Lord.* A Man may see God without Peace, but he can't see God without Holiness.

Peace is a sort of provision that will not keep if it be not well salted : Therefore our Lord Christ hath taught you how to preserve it : *Mark 9. 50. Have salt in your selves, and have peace one with another.*

Εὐδοκίᾳ
ὡς πλεονεχίᾳ
⊙
Col. 3. 14.

1st 4. 32.

5. Keep Love in constant exercise. This is a true principle of Union. It is not only the knot that ties it, but the bond that holds it. It is the cement that holds the stones of Christs Spiritual Temple together. This was the sacred fodder which united the Primitive Christians so firmly of old, that they were *of one heart, and one soul.*

We are united to Christ by Faith, but to one another by Love : And we should be careful to strengthen both the bands, that neither of them be broken. The true Mother would rather lose the Child, then see it divided. Among the Romans they had a Temple dedicated *Jovi depositorio*, because there they laid aside their quarrels and differences before they entered into the Senate. Shall Heathens lay aside their mutual jars

ars for common good, and shall not the Ministers of the Gospel do it much more for the Churches safety?

6. Pray much for that wisdom that is from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated. Jam. 3. 17.

3. Indeavour what in you lies to perfect this Union. Nothing less then this will fully answer the Prayer of Christ. He doth not only pray that his people may be made one, but that they may be made perfect in one. John 17. 23. And if Christ prays for it, ought not we to indeavour it; that we may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment? 1 Cor. 1. 10.

And because the oneness can never be fully perfected here, therefore let us long for Heaven, where this Blessing shall be compleat. Here we enjoy it by way of initiation, there it will be in consummation. All partition Walls shall then be destroyed. There all contrary Opinions, and differing Sentiments shall cease. Their Luther and Zuinglius, Hooper and Ridley, shall be all of a mind. Many Spiritual Gifts and Graces shall cease there; whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, or whether there be tongues, they shall cease. Nay Faith, Hope, Repentance, &c. they shall cease too; but Charity never fails. 1 Cor. 13. 8. Love and Union shall go with you to Heaven, and shall be a part of the Saints felicity for ever. It shall no more be said, I am of Paul, and I of Apollo, but God shall be all in all.

I will conclude all with a short Exhortation, and a Prayer as short. The Exhortation is in Philip. 2. five first Verses. If their be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind: Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. This is the Exhortation.

The

To The Prayer from Rom. 15. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Eph. 3. 21.

To him be glory in all the Churches by Christ Jesus, through
all ages. AMEN.

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